

DINESH CHANDRA KOTHARI

TURNING DREAMS INTO REALITY WITH SHEER GRIT

A Chartered Accountant by qualification, Mr. Kothari is a serial entrepreneur who possesses a rich experience of over 46 years. His vision to give back to society and an unceasing quest for laying a strong foundation for tomorrow motivated him to establish a chain of schools in India and the UAE

BY RICHASANG



Mr. Kothari's career span reflects a wide range of experience in financial services, corporate and financial structuring and analysis of projects for financial assistance and initial public offering. He started his career with Merchant Banking Division of ICICI Limited. Thereafter, he joined Bukhatir Group of Companies, Sharjah, U.A.E. and worked his way up to achieve the position of CEO before setting-up his corporate consultancy and advisory services.

Eventually, he diversified his business to Merger & Acquisition (M&A) practice, bringing foreign investment in Dubai. Inspired by his late grandfather Shri Shugan Chandra Kothari, he set up DPS at Jodhpur in India. With an aim of providing quality education to the children of expatriates in the UAE, he established DPS (CBSE) in Sharjah and Dubai and Victory Heights Primary School (VHPS) and South View School (a British curriculum secondary school), was launched in 2018 in the Remraam Community, Dubai (British curriculum) to engage and contribute to a wider section of Western European expatriates. Recently, he has laid the foundation of Delhi Private School in Ras Al Khaimah (RAK), which will be functional from April 2021 onwards, to serve the Indian community based there.

For his noteworthy contribution to business and society, Mr. Kothari has been conferred 'Pride of India' Award by IBPC and honoured with the prestigious Mother Teresa Award for excellence in the field of Education.

CREATING A SURE SHOT RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Mr. Kothari carved his own route to success with sheer determination and passion to make it big. He kept marching ahead with big dreams in his eyes and determination to turn them into reality. In the process, he has set an example for others to follow. As he puts it, "When I arrived in the UAE, I was a 24-year-old young man with \$8 in my pocket and big dreams. I started out as the Finance Manager for a company under the Bukhatir

Group in Sharjah in 1974 and by March 1978, at the age of 28, I was made the CEO of the Group which employed over 5000 persons in around 15 different companies. It was the most wonderful learning phase for me, and I could not have asked for more. I had created financial stability for my family and myself. My salary and bonus together fetched me an annual pay of a million dirhams. I could afford to buy a house in India, educate my children and more. But I wanted to give back to society somehow, and that was how my foray into education happened. In 1998, I set up first not-for-profit school – Delhi Public School in Jodhpur, my home town, in memory of my late grandfather. There was no looking back after that.”

Sharing his success mantra, he elaborates, “My mantra for achieving success is simple – see a dream, add grit, stir in hard-work and wrap both these up with focus, and you’ll find yourself getting closer to your visualised goal. While travelling towards your goal, you will experience hiccups on the way, but your fortitude and resolve are what will keep you going.”

He further adds, “My life was inspired by the profound advice I got as a youngster. The best advice I ever got was from my father and it was: ‘Man gives his best only under pressure, and once you commit to do something, do not renege.’ However, it is not just one golden rule that I follow. What really pushed me towards success was that I was honourable in my commitments. One should not simply chase mirages but have faith in oneself and be sincere. It was this mindset that helped me achieve the goals I had set. I’m yet to achieve all my targets; this is what keeps me moving in life. Having said that, I also feel completely satisfied with my achievements so far.”

A LEADER WHO INSPIRES EXCELLENCE

A great leader, Mr. Kothari leads by example and inspires commitment and engagement in his team, augmenting performance and productivity. Throwing light on his leadership style, he says, “The people management skills that I apply as a leader today are something I imbibed from my first boss, back in the 70s. I believe in being a leader who sees the potential in every staff. I am proud to say that we barely have a one per cent attrition of staff across our schools. Yes, education is a business but we take it that it is our business to provide the best to students and



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respect all stakeholders. However, I firmly believe that to be associated with education sector requires passion – one that is not necessarily driven by money alone.”

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY

Mr. Kothari is of the view that education has the power to transform societies. He is deeply concerned about disseminating education to students from the economically weaker sections of the society so that they rise up from poverty and exploitation and are able to reach their full potential.

In his own words, “I strongly believe in giving back to society. I am on a journey of nation-building, in a small yet significant way. Every school that I chair offers a very generous Scholarship policy to benefit students whose families express the need for financial support. DPS Jodhpur is a completely non-profit school with 5,000 students. It is a fee-paying school but I do not take any of the school’s profit. I prefer to

stay as the Trustee of the school.”

He further elaborates, “We take great pride in integrating social and environmental concerns to our educational establishments. Our schools in the UAE have adopted villages in India and are distributing solar lanterns to the rural population under the initiative, ‘Light a Billion Lamps.’ Our schools have also initiated endowment programs such as, ‘Aao Sangh Paden’ to support the deserving students of economically weaker sections in India.”

He concludes, “We provide financial aid to the needy families by fee waivers, offer help to bereaved staff members, extend contributions to various charities, impart training to the ancillary staff in Computer skills, English and Arabic. We support parents and the community by wellness programs: free yoga classes and counselling. We also offer free e-library and hobby classes to students after school. We also have enrichment and remedial classes after school for students, free of charge.”